



## CONTACT

Elizabeth Bement  
2019 Commemoration  
P: 703-915-5830

[elizabeth.bement@finnpartners.com](mailto:elizabeth.bement@finnpartners.com)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION TO COMMEMORATE 400<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST OFFICIAL ENGLISH THANKSGIVING ON DECEMBER 4 AT JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT**

*The event will feature special remarks from Virginia's First Lady Pamela Northam and featured speaker Michelle Gielan, Executive Producer of "The Happiness Advantage" on PBS*

**Jamestown, VA** (November 25, 2019) – On Wednesday, December 4, 2019, [Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution](#), will host the final event of the 2019 Commemorative year, the [400th Commemorative Ceremony of the First Official English Thanksgiving](#) at Jamestown Settlement. The event will feature remarks from featured speaker Michelle Gielan, best-selling author, Executive Producer of "The Happiness Advantage" on PBS, and featured professor in Oprah's Happiness course, with special remarks by Virginia's First Lady Pamela Northam, and music by Jamestown High School Choir. The event will take place from 2 - 3 PM and is free and open to the public. Also, The Virginia Peninsula Foodbank and American Evolution are partnering for a one-day, onsite food drive at the ceremony to benefit local area food banks. Ceremony attendees may bring non-perishable food donations.

Virginia Governor Ralph S. Northam has issued a [proclamation](#) recognizing December 4, 2019 as the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Official English Thanksgiving in the North America.

On December 4, 1619, a group of English settlers arrived safely in Virginia and held a ceremony of Thanksgiving which was to be observed "annually and perpetually" thereafter. The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts didn't host their first Thanksgiving until 1620. Historians note that in the early days, the celebration of Thanksgiving was strictly a religious experience, focused entirely on prayer. It was a solemn affair, not a festival of food. At the behest of written orders given by the Berkeley Company to Captain John Woodlief, it was declared that the English settlers' arrival must "be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God."

"We are pleased to welcome visitors from around the country to Jamestown Settlement to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the first official English Thanksgiving that took place in Charles City, Virginia in 1619," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. "Many people are unaware that Virginia is the true home of America's first English Thanksgiving, and we invite all Americans to learn more about this historical event."

The 400th Commemorative Ceremony of the First Official English Thanksgiving is a signature event of Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. Throughout 2019, American Evolution engaged with Virginia institutions and national partners to convene more than 20 events, programs, educational initiatives performances and exhibitions that showcased significant historical events that occurred 400

years ago in Virginia. In addition to the first official English Thanksgiving, these 1619 events include the first representative legislative assembly, the arrival of the first Africans to English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers, and the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of the Virginia Colony, and set our nation on a course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. For more information about American Evolution, please visit:

<https://www.americanevolution2019.com/>.

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#### **About the 2019 Commemoration**

The 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. American Evolution commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Energy is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.